
REVIEWS

from here, by Alice Frampton (Winchester, Va.: Red Moon Press, 2019). 102 pages; 4½" × 6½". Glossy four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-947271-46-3. Price: \$15.00 from www.redmoonpress.com.

Reviewed by Brad Bennett

from here is Alice Frampton's second full-length collection of haiku, her first in ten years. Frampton calls this work a sequel to *a gate left open* (Red Moon Press, 2009), and by sequel I think she means a documentation of the next part of her life. This is a very personal collection of poignant haiku, presumably and primarily about how Frampton has coped with loss. In the author's note, she writes: "Most times, life throws us curves, but sometimes life throws us sinkers. And still, the game plays on."

The collection contains eighty-four haiku, one per page, divided into three sections entitled "empty," "light," and "here," with forty-three, thirty-five, and six poems respectively. The poems in "empty" begin on New Year's Eve, travel through the four seasons, and end in late winter. Many of the poems deal with loneliness and sadness. For instance, some present forms of light that have been extinguished:

New Year's Eve	candle smoke—
a solar panel	for all I know
in the dark	he's not coming

Other sad images that emerge in this section include empty seats on a ferry, feet dragging through grass, and the last jar of applesauce. Using brevity and a commitment to concrete images, Frampton also successfully explores existential moments that are so difficult to express in haiku:

winter solstice	to be
the staircase	or not to be
to the cellar	winter

Yet, there are moments when she presents hints of healing, or at least a steadfast commitment to continue on:

slack tide	a boat
when coming meets going	bucking the wind
midnight sun	New Year's Day

Similar to the first section, the second section, “light,” starts on New Year’s Day, travels through the seasons, and ends in winter. But that’s where the similarities end. This section, as its title suggests, feels much lighter, as if the author (and the reader) may be starting to feel some hope. In fact, the first poem launches us in a new direction:

new resolutions ...
my granddaughter plans
a pretend tea party

This section is rich with connections, to family, to kids, to a pet dog, to an herb garden. We find the word “we” more often in these poems. While the first section was full of solo thoughts and acts, this section is teeming with social events:

ice cream	autumn equinox
thickening as it churns	the tap tap tap
family reunion	of Bingo markers

“light” also refers to humor, and this section includes wry senryu that present an acceptance of aging and life’s inevitable last laugh:

at my age
the distance from my foot
to my mouth

snowy morning—
the grocery clerk
calls me Ma'am

The last section, “here,” starts on New Year’s Day and ends in spring. By moving only from winter to spring, Frampton carries us toward an unfinished future. A couple of the poems in this section deal with shaking things up a bit, as if that’s what we need to jump-start a new journey:

snow globe
my grandkids shake up
the whole house

jalapeño jelly
on my toast
Monday morning

We get the sense that Frampton is ready to face whatever comes next, even when she doesn’t know where that will take her:

cherry blossoms ...
where do we go
from here

The journey on which Frampton takes us readers moves full circle from emptiness to emptiness. We start with an empty that feels more like “hollow” and “lonely” and we end with an empty that feels more like “blank slate,” accepting life as is and ready to fill our days with connection and lightness. While the Japanese concept of “*ma*” is primarily aesthetic, describing the potency of space in haiku, ikebana, sumi-e brush painting, or other arts, there is also a psychological component. Wikipedia cites a blog post by Yukiko Kasaki describing *ma* as “an emptiness full of possibilities, like a promise yet to be fulfilled.” Frampton is very present in this new empty moment, a moment of possibilities. Reading these poems, we are left with the confidence that we can also survive life’s losses.

Frampton is a veteran haiku poet at the top of her craft. She excels at spare haiku and senryu that are grounded in the concrete and connect universally. There’s not much ego here, because she wants to welcome the reader and share what she’s learned. Frampton’s language is quite acces-

sible, and, in fact, includes many everyday phrases used often in conversations, like “we have to talk” and “as far as I can see.” Some tropes are more specific, such as “like father like son” or “sticks and stones.” The poems, because they are expressed using this friendly voice, feel like a conversation between Frampton and a close friend. We, her readers, feel connected to her life and enriched by her wisdom. At the end of the book, Frampton has found comfort through relationships, and also, likely, from her chosen craft.

Jack Kerouac and the Traditions of Classic and Modern Haiku, by Yoshinobu Hakutani (New York: Lexington Books, 2019). 193 pages; 6" × 9". Glossy four-color hardcover. ISBN 978-1-4985-5827-3. Price: \$68.85+ from online booksellers.

Going to the Pine: Four Essays on Bashō, by Geoffrey Wilkinson (United Kingdom: Privately printed, 2019). 52 pages; 6" × 9". Matte four-color card covers; perfectbound. ISBN 978-1-9160622-0-7. Price: \$9.99 from the author at Franksbridge, Llandrindod Wells, Powys LD1 5SA, United Kingdom.

Reviewed by Randy Brooks

This has been a great year for new scholarship on haiku, and in this review, I compare two compilations of essays on haiku by Dr. Yoshinobu Hakutani and Geoffrey Wilkinson. Dr. Yoshinobu Hakutani is Professor of English at Kent State University, where he teaches courses in American literature and linguistics. He has a distinguished record of cross-cultural scholarship examining exchanges between Japanese and Western cultures evident in Modernist, Contemporary, and African American poetry. Geoffrey Wilkinson is an independent researcher with a degree from Cambridge University, where he studied philosophy, history, and literature. His book gathers four essays on Bashō as a poet who developed an egoless art that embraces the uncertainties and “transitori-